

USDA Renews Agricultural Air Quality Task Force, Appoints Members

WASHINGTON, Aug. 21, 2013 – U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the renewal of USDA's Agricultural Air Quality Task Force and the selection of its members for the 2013-2015 term. The task force is composed of representatives from industry, agriculture, academia, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and other agricultural and environmental experts.

Recognizing the members for their service, Vilsack said, "We can only make good decisions on complex and emerging challenges like air quality with expert guidance from a cross-section of interests. Our goal is to minimize the public impact of air pollution that is associated with agricultural practices while—at the same time—preserving farming as a way of life. We're doing this by developing science-based climate solutions and cutting-edge technologies, and by working closely with farmers, ranchers, and land owners as well as our federal partners."

The Agricultural Air Quality Task Force promotes USDA research efforts and identifies cost-effective ways the agriculture industry can improve air quality. It also helps better coordinate activities and resources among USDA agencies and other federal partners such as the Environmental Protection Agency.

The task force is charged with:

- 1) Advising the agriculture secretary on air quality and its relationship to agriculture based on sound scientific findings;
- 2) Reviewing research on agricultural air quality supported by federal agencies;
- 3) Promoting intergovernmental (federal, state, local and tribal) coordination in establishing agricultural air quality policy to avoid duplication of efforts; and
- 4) Ensuring that air quality conservation practices supported by USDA are based on peer reviewed research and are economically feasible for agricultural producers.

The task force was formed in 1996 at the direction of Congress to address agricultural air quality issues. Chaired by Jason Weller, chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, this is the eighth task force since the first was assembled in 1997.

The members of the 2013-2015 task force are:

Arizona

Kevin G. Rogers, Producer/Arizona Farm Bureau Federation

California

Kevin Abernathy, Milk Producers Council

Paul Buttner, California Rice Commission
Cynthia Cory, California Farm Bureau Federation
Manuel F. Cunha, Jr., Nisei Farmers League
Richard McVaigh, San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District

Florida

Michael Abazinge, Florida A&M University

Idaho

April Leytem, USDA Agricultural Research Service

Iowa

Chris Petersen, Producer/National Farmers Union
Hongwei Xin, Iowa State University

Louisiana

Annette Sharp, Louisiana Dept. Environmental Quality

Maryland

D'Ann Williams, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health

Minnesota

Larry Jacobson, University of Minnesota

Missouri

Terry Spence, Producer

North Carolina

Lisa Greene, RTI International
Sally Shaver, Shaver Consulting Inc.
Lingjuan Wang Li, North Carolina State University

Pennsylvania

William Angstadt, Delaware-Maryland Agribusiness Association
Eileen Wheeler, Pennsylvania State University

Tennessee

Robert Burns, University of Tennessee
William Norman, National Cotton Council

Texas

Robert Avant, Jr., Texas A&M University

Brock Faulkner, Texas A&M University

Bryan Shaw, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Virginia

William Herz, The Fertilizer Institute

Washington

Nichole Embertson, Whatcom Conservation District

Brenton Sharratt, USDA Agricultural Research Service

The Agricultural Air Quality Task Force is scheduled to meet later this fall. For more information on the task force, visit [NRCS' air quality webpage](#). To learn more about USDA's work to help rural America create climate solutions and the effort to reduce carbon pollution, visit www.usda.gov/climatesolutions.

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